

sweatshops, may abuse men, women and especially children. In this case, I would point out that areas where we get strategic materials now that will increase their industry are abusive of children. Specifically, you can see a picture here of a child who's a Peruvian miner, children who are Colombian miners, and a Ugandan miner, all of whom are young children, all of whom are having their futures closed down because of this.

I oppose this bill. I ask that we yield back to the principles expounded by the gentleman from New Mexico and the gentleman from Alaska.

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 1½ minutes.

I say to my colleague from across the river from me in Kentucky that, as he knows, jobs in both our hardrock mining industry and our coal industry are on the decline already. Those jobs have been declining; and as the gentleman so well knows, as well as my colleagues on the minority side, these jobs are declining today because of the technologies that are coming in place.

Look at our coal industry. We're mining more coal as we're producing more hardrock minerals, but with less man and woman power because of the technologies that are replacing man and woman power. It's that simple.

So while the jobs may be on the decline, the production is on the upswing.

I would say as well to my colleagues who raise the specter of here the Democrats go raising taxes again, note this week in the Wall Street Journal, this week the administration, the administration, not the Congress, announced that it's raising the royalty rates for oil and gas from the Gulf of Mexico to 18.75 percent from 16.67 percent for offshore leases to be offered next year. Even with this increase, the gulf will remain one of the lowest tax oil basins in the world.

So let's put this proposed 8 percent royalty on hardrock mining in perspective, please. It's less than half. Let's also keep in mind that hardrock mining is the only industry that pays no royalty on public lands, and all other countries and all States, for that matter, charge a royalty. Companies impose royalties and private agreements on hardrock mines. Let's keep in perspective what we're doing here; and, remember, it was the administration this week that raised royalties on Gulf of Mexico leases.

Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. FARR).

Mr. FARR. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I rise in support of H.R. 2262 so we can, after 135 years, update the 1872 Mining Law. Since Ulysses S. Grant's administration in 1872, the Mining Law has governed hardrock mining on our public lands, public lands. Those are lands which you, the taxpayers, own.

For nearly 100 years, those lands have been debated in Congress about changing policies that give away public

resources and leave each new generation with a larger legacy of unreclaimed lands and degraded streams.

Debate has continued. It's continued while northern California's Iron Mountain spewed nearly a quarter of the copper and zinc discharged by industries to the Nation's surface waters; during the decades of efforts to control acidic, metal-laden discharges from old sulfur mines southeast of Lake Tahoe; as historic lands of the Indian Pass in the area of Southern California in the desert area faced destruction from the proposed Glamis mine; and as California cities spend millions of dollars to treat hazardous mine discharges and fight giant mining corporations in court.

Like the pollution problems it creates, the 1872 Mining Law persists, but that will now change with passage of this bill, and we owe that hard work to Chairman RAHALL and to my colleague JIM COSTA from California.

While this congressional debate has continued after all these years, we've allowed mining companies to take billions of dollars' worth of gold, silver, and other minerals from our public lands for free. However, we will no longer treat that as we have not treated oil, coal, natural gas. So they will all now have to pay.

While countless hearings have been held, nearly 3.5 million acres of public lands have been deeded to mining claim holders for as little as \$2.50 an acre. We've had to buy back some of this land to protect the unique ecological, recreational and cultural values, paying prices much higher than those set in the Mining Law.

And during our long deliberation, the price tag for mining cleanup has risen astronomically. Since the House last acted on reform legislation, more than 20 mines and mills have been added to the infamous Superfund National Priority List, and the EPA Inspector General has warned that nearly \$24 billion in cleanup costs from mine sites now exists, some of which will require treatment in perpetuity.

However, this is about to change. For today, the Hardrock Mining Reclamation Act of 2007 will do what it should have done years ago. I urge the passage of this important legislation.

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Chairman again, the gentleman from California said let's talk about the facts. He said we do not have rare Earth. We do have rare Earth minerals; we don't have rare Earth mines. Those were shut down by the EPA due to lawsuits. U.S. companies developed the uses for rare Earths, and now we import them.

Mr. Chairman, I yield 3½ minutes to the gentleman from Idaho (Mr. SALI) who has done great work on this bill.

Mr. SALI. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong opposition to the bill before us.

Plain and simple, this bill is bad for America because it is bad policy. My concern centers around the long-lasting impacts that this bill will have on

the First District of Idaho and on America's future.

The bill imposes a royalty that will threaten the existence of domestic mineral production. Please note that mining is already one of the most regulated industries in the United States. Everyone believes that we need safe, productive, and environmentally responsible mineral development and that there needs to be a logical and efficient way to deal with abandoned mines. We all agree on those goals. But this bill takes an environmental cause, like abandoned mines, and uses it as a cover for a tax hike that will accomplish nothing less than outsourcing our domestic mining industry. That is bad policy.

Hardrock mining is dangerous. It takes a lot of grit to engage in it. Today, hardworking professionals do it here in the United States. This bill, however, will send American production overseas, where there are limited or no environmental standards and where child labor is used.

As the gentleman from Kentucky before me mentioned, H.R. 2262 makes America more dependent on child miners from around the world for our minerals and metal needs. The International Labor Organization estimates there are over 1 million children that are working in mines and quarries around the world. This bill will not only ship our mining industry jobs overseas; it will ensure that American mineral needs are satisfied by child labor. That is just plain wrong; it is bad policy.

My colleagues across the aisle have made a commitment to the American people to combat global warming. This bill will ensure that they cannot meet that commitment. How are they going to combat global warming if they do not have the very minerals that they need to do it? Alternative energy is dependent on minerals that we mine here in the U.S. For instance, copper is used for wind, solar power, and fuel cells, just to name a few items. Currently, domestic production cannot meet domestic demand. This is kind of like having the Democrats promise us sand castles but banning domestic sand. They're cutting off the domestic supply of minerals that they need to deliver on their commitment to fight global warming. Once again, H.R. 2262 is bad policy.

Mining industry jobs are important in the First District in Idaho. H.R. 2262 will outsource these good-paying jobs that America and Idaho needs. H.R. 2262 will take these jobs away from hardworking American professionals and force them on child laborers. Once again, H.R. 2262 is bad policy.

My final point is this: our national defense depends on minerals mined in America. This bill will result in an importation of the very minerals we need to keep America safe from every unfriendly country from which we are protecting ourselves. Yes, that is right, we'll be asking our enemies to supply